Executive Summary

During the fourth year of the country programme UNICEF Costa Rica continued to strengthen its support to national, local and civil society priorities for children and adolescents in the context of an upper-middle-income country (UMIC) in transition.

Costa Rica is being reviewed for accession to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), reflecting national aspirations to engage in the ‘big leagues of development players’ and recognition of its social and economic achievements. Nevertheless, the situation analysis phase of the development of the new country programme document (CPD) 2018-2022, while presenting a platform for new partnerships, also evidenced areas that affect opportunities for children and adolescents to live healthy and secure lives, such as: increasing rates of violence, rising obesity rates, inequities affecting indigenous and Afro-Costa Rican children, early pregnancy and motherhood, adolescent suicides and secondary school exclusion. The percentage of persons living in poverty dropped for the first time in seven years, from 22.3 to 20.5 per cent.

Four programmatic achievements stand out corresponding to UNICEF’s engagement in Costa Rica. In the area of demonstrative pilots and modelling, UNICEF supported policy dialogue and generated evidence to facilitate the Government’s decision to take the successful ‘Houses of Happiness’ initiative to national scale. Houses of Happiness provide integral child care and development services for indigenous children that accompany their parents who migrate from Panamá for the coffee harvest in Costa Rica.

Secondly, in knowledge management, UNICEF continued to make important contributions, including support for the first height and weight census of 750,000 students, the global multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) pilot and the inclusion of a children’s module in national social maps. Third, South-South cooperation was bolstered through the visit by a team of Belizian mayors and government officials, accompanied by UNICEF Costa Rica and counterparts from Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Perú, to learn from the ‘Child-Friendly Municipalities’ initiative. This South-South exchange strengthened the analysis around strategic policy development, participation of children and adolescents in their communities and effective management of municipal teams for improved protection of the rights of children and adolescents. Finally, innovation was solidified through collaboration between the ministries of education and justice for violence prevention in schools, as well as at the local level through the ‘Families in Action’ programme, a nationwide network of parents that allows participants living in conditions of poverty to participate in parenting and rearing patterns with their children to replace negative environments with caring and nurturing ones.

Four examples of advocacy and partnerships were instrumental to UNICEF Costa Rica’s engagement with key influencers and stakeholders during 2016. In social media, UNICEF highlighted the rights and wellbeing of the most vulnerable children, underscoring Agenda 2030, early childhood development, emergencies, the 70th anniversary and the Zika virus. This led to more knowledge on these issues, but also to an increase in UNICEF’s digital footprint: the number of Facebook followers more than doubled from 24,900 to 53,840; reaching from 23,000 to 160,000 people; and increasing engagement to 5.36 per cent for the
The website reached 52,700 visitors, with 67,900 sessions and there were 10,300 Twitter followers.

UNICEF also facilitated a partnership between the Office of the Second Vice President, the National Child Welfare Agency (PANI) and the National Women’s Institute (INAMU) to commemorate, for the first time, the International Day of the Girl Child, focused on the situation of girls and adolescents with disabilities and firmly placing the issue on the national and regional agenda. Thirdly, the Judiciary, National Assembly, Ministry of Justice, Public Defender, National Ombudsman and Bar Association, as well as Defence for Children International and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (ILANUD) convened to sponsor the congress to observe the 20th anniversary of the Juvenile Criminal Justice Law, with leading national and international experts. Finally, perhaps the strongest partnership was reflected in the trust placed by the Ministry of Public Education in UNICEF to support violence prevention in schools, educational exclusion, early childhood education (ECE), capacity building and policy development.

These achievements occurred against the backdrop of a high rate of staff turnover during the year that had a significant impact on programmatic and operational continuity, closely monitored by the country management team (CMT) and prompting an analysis of lessons learned from this situation. Nonetheless, financial implementation was solid at 83 per cent for RR and 97 per cent for OR. An important external challenge was the lack of institutional coordination, which generates inefficiencies in programmes for children, compounded by support by some legislators in the National Assembly to curtail budgets for children.

### Humanitarian Assistance

Because of the intense damage caused by Hurricane Otto in late November 2016, UNICEF Costa Rica actively worked with the UN Country Team (UNCT) and Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to activate disaster-response mechanisms to support national recovery efforts. This storm, which traversed the entire northern coast, was the first time in history that a hurricane crossed the entire country. The hurricane maintained maximum sustained winds of about 110 km/h and in some of the most affected areas, heavy rains caused flooding equivalent to a month and a half of precipitation. The weather conditions caused flash flooding of various rivers that impacted many communities, leading to partial or full evacuations of entire communities. Due to the hurricane, a state of emergency for the entire country was declared on November 24.

At this stage, the UN system was in the process of assessing the damage and identifying possible actions that could support the strategy formulated by the Government of Costa Rica’s National Emergency Commission (CNE). The strategy was entitled: ‘Proposed Recovery of Territories Affected by Hurricane Otto: Do Not Make a Disaster Where Disaster Struck - Focus on Risk Reduction’. UNICEF Costa Rica provided technical assistance in the specific areas of education and protection. The Ministry of Education requested UNICEF support for conducting a preliminary assessment in the affected areas, with the view to identifying the main needs of the education sector in the affected communities of Bagaces, La Cruz and Upala. In response, the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO) fielded an emergency education expert who spent one week visiting the affected areas, together with the Ministry of Education, to address the needs of the education sector.

At the conclusion of the mission, a report and recommendations were elaborated for consideration by the Ministry, which are now part of a three-part action plan: infrastructure rehabilitation, curriculum reform and development and psychosocial and economic support for the educational community. It is expected that this plan, and UNICEF’s support, will be instrumental in strengthening emergency and disaster risk reduction in the education sector.
UNICEF Costa Rica supported the National Child Welfare Agency (PANI) to train its regional directors in the provision of psychosocial support for children, adolescents and women in temporary shelters, using the "Return to Happiness" methodology, in coordination with the Red Cross and the CNE’s Committee of Psychosocial Technical Assistance. UNICEF also continued to support the Government in its response to the crisis of Cuban, Haitian and African migrants that started in late 2015, and it provided technical assistance to PANI to organize recreational activities for migrant children and their local peers living in the border towns where large numbers of migrants are still concentrated. These activities helped to reduce the xenophobia promoted by some anti-immigrant groups in the country.

The country management team diligently monitored and updated the Early Warning Early Action (EWEA) portal and benefited from the visit of colleagues from the UNICEF Regional Office Emergency Section, who carried out capacity building for the office staff.

**Emerging Areas of Importance**

**Refugee and migrant children.** By strengthening the capacities of immigration authorities to implement protective measures, UNICEF Costa Rica has been working with national and local institutions to establish special shelters to respond to the emergency of migrant children and women from Haiti, Cuba and Africa. This crisis started and intensified in late 2015 and persisted during most of 2016. In addition, through the innovative Houses of Happiness project (Casas de la Alegria), UNICEF supported the development and implementation of comprehensive day-care centres for the migrant indigenous Gnäbe-Bugle children working at coffee plantations, enhancing the institutional response for provision of services such as food, early childhood care and both protective and development components. Due to the success of this initiative, which is part of a larger joint UN programme funded by the UN Human Security Trust Fund, the Government has decided to scale up the programme nationally.

**Accelerate integrated early childhood development (ECD).** In 2016 UNICEF Costa Rica intensified its advocacy, technical assistance, monitoring, and communication efforts to defend the rights of children, particularly in early childhood. Specifically, UNICEF promoted the understanding and coordination of the different sectors involved in the education sector, undertaking advocacy with early childhood institutions, to achieve progress toward defining the needs and formulating a comprehensive early childhood policy. UNICEF’s advocacy and technical assistance strengthened the implementation process and prompted a political commitment to make universal preschool education available for children from the age of four years and three months onwards, as well as to develop educational standards for children between the ages of three and four. This push for universal preschool education gained traction during 2016 in the context of the ‘Strategy for Early Childhood’, which has led to greater institutional proximity between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health at its Child Nutritional and Educational Centres (CEN CINAI).

In addition, UNICEF’s technical assistance supported sending facilitators to 18 of the 27 educational regions, particularly those with poor overall living conditions. The process of selecting the centres and establishing a strategic approach enabled the formation of partnerships with other actors in the educational community. UNICEF technical assistance also focused on support for the ‘Teachers Study Guide’ for the preschool education programme, with the objective of reaching 97,000 children and 6,000 teachers who participate in early childhood education and improving teacher performance. In addition, various supplemental actions were conducted, including working with advisers and teachers, hosting discussion forums, giving advice and monitoring programme implementation and a campaign to motivate parents to send children to preschool. UNICEF also helped to strengthen and expand the ‘Music for Children’ programme, in which approximately 250 teachers and 4,100 students from five educational regions were trained.
Greater focus on the second decade of life. UNICEF Costa Rica has a dedicated programme component on education with focus on educational exclusion at the secondary school level, which includes supporting the Ministry of Public Education to implement its innovative strategy ‘I’m All In’ (Yo Me Apunto), which includes an innovative perspective by responding to the specificities of different regions of the country and the most disadvantaged adolescents, such as those from indigenous and Afro-Costa Rican communities. In this sense, it seeks to guarantee the right to education based on strong partnerships, knowledge and analysis of the Costa Rican education system and collaboration at different levels of action. UNICEF also promoted an exchange of good practices with adolescents aimed at preventing violence in 100 schools, and is currently working with the Ministry of Justice to develop a strategy to improve abilities and skills for adolescents in four communities that are highly vulnerable to violence. This work was complemented by support to the judiciary system to strengthen juvenile justice programmes and initiatives.

Summary Notes and Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMP</td>
<td>Annual management plan</td>
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<td>CAI</td>
<td>Child-friendly municipalities</td>
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<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<td>CEN CINAI</td>
<td>Child Nutritional and Educational Centres</td>
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<td>CMT</td>
<td>Country management team</td>
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<td>CNE</td>
<td>National Commission on Emergencies</td>
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<td>CNNA</td>
<td>National Council of Childhood and Adolescence</td>
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<td>CONAPDIS</td>
<td>National Council on Persons with Disabilities</td>
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<td>CPD</td>
<td>Country programme document</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Convention on the Rights of the Child</td>
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<td>DCT</td>
<td>Direct cash transfer</td>
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<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early childhood development</td>
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<td>ECE</td>
<td>Early childhood education</td>
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<td>EDNA</td>
<td>Report on the Situation of Children and Adolescent Rights</td>
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<td>EWEA</td>
<td>Early Warning, Early Action</td>
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<td>FAMA</td>
<td>Families in Action (Academy of Teaching-PANI)</td>
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<td>GIG</td>
<td>Interagency Working Group on Gender</td>
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<td>GSSC</td>
<td>Global shared services centre</td>
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<td>HCT</td>
<td>Humanitarian country team</td>
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<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human immunodeficiency virus/Acquired immune deficiency syndrome</td>
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<td>IB</td>
<td>Institutional budget</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and communications technology</td>
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<td>IFAM</td>
<td>Institute of Municipal Development and Assistance</td>
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<td>ILANUD</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<td>IMAS</td>
<td>National Institute for Social Care</td>
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<td>INAMU</td>
<td>National Women’s Institute</td>
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<td>INEC</td>
<td>National Institute of Statistics and Census</td>
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<td>LACRO</td>
<td>UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>MCSF</td>
<td>Multi-country support facility</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Ministry of Public Education</td>
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<td>MICS</td>
<td>Multiple indicator cluster survey</td>
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<td>MIDEPLAN</td>
<td>Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy</td>
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UNICEF contributed to capacity development of PANI, 12 municipalities and 19 NGOs for replicating Families in Action (FAMA), an innovative parenting education and empowerment strategy aimed at modifying authoritarian environments and domestic violence towards children, reaching approximately 11,000 parent mobilizers and directly impacting at least 30,000 children. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Public Education in the management and implementation of secondary school retention strategies, within the framework of the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ (I’m All In) initiative, and promoted the exchange of best practices and participation by students from different educational communities nationwide.

UNICEF also provided technical support for achieving universal preschool education by strengthening capacities to undertake situation analyses and working with schools and educational communities in districts with high levels of exclusion. UNICEF strengthened the capacities of the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) to generate information and data on children’s issues, with a focus on inequalities, and was counselled through the project “Social Mapping of Children and Adolescents” as well as through undertaking the MICS global pilot. The Ministries of Health and Public Education received support to carry out the first-ever National School Census of Weight and Height. This information will strengthen evidence-based public policies and the impact of national Government programmes, including the poverty reduction programme.

INEC and the National Council on Persons with Disabilities (CNAPDIS) participated in a workshop sponsored by UNICEF Headquarters (HQ) on measuring childhood disability, which strengthened capacities to develop appropriate measurement strategies. The General Comptroller, national Ombudsman and Social Development Fund participated in an international seminar on improving the measurement of investment in children, held in...
Mexico City. In the aftermath of Hurricane Otto, UNICEF supported capacity building to address the disaster and to assess its impact on the education sector.

Evidence Generation, Policy Dialogue and Advocacy

UNICEF Costa Rica has supported the Houses of Happiness strategy, which provides childcare and integrated development services to about 1,500 indigenous migrant children. An evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy strategy, led by UNICEF and other stakeholders, was implemented to assist in the Government decision to take the initiative to national scale by illustrating the austere conditions in which most of these indigenous migrant children live, as they accompany their families from Panama to work in the Costa Rican coffee harvest, as well as drawing attention to the need to provide comprehensive protection for this population group. UNICEF supported PANI in the development of a new Master Plan focused on the systematic promotion of children’s rights, using a strategic approach based on a process of policy dialogue, which facilitated the creation of mobile units, early intervention centres and new offices.

This policy dialogue also contributed to the development of innovative methodologies to prevent domestic violence, such as the FAMA initiative on institutionalization of adolescents who have behavioural issues or are in conflict with the law. It also led to improvements in the National Child Protection System (SNPI) and to the development of a national plan to prevent commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. UNICEF advocated for the incorporation of a childhood module into the Government’s social maps of children and adolescents, which will provide key information for the implementation of the national strategy for poverty reduction. The technical assistance provided to the Ministry Of Public Education was accompanied by advocacy and dialogue that helped to cement this partnership through support to the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ strategy, the regional support and monitoring plan of the national early childhood strategy, protocols against violence, drugs, weapons and bullying and mechanisms to support children’s right to education.

Partnerships

UNICEF Costa Rica strengthened partnerships in the education sector by supporting the identification of new stakeholders to support ‘Yo Me Apunto’, a strategy to combat school exclusion, with communication campaigns and the sharing of best practices, complemented by a breakfast meeting to engage leading private sector companies in the strategy. The partnership between the Ministries of Education and Justice was strengthened through the participation of more than 200 students, who developed best practices resulting from the lessons and protocols on violence prevention previously supported by UNICEF. This partnership also included the development of a new model for community-based prevention of violence (Civic Centres without Walls) through close work with adolescent groups.

UNICEF supported the second meeting of ministers of education of the community of Latin American and Caribbean states, which promoted the theme: ‘Equity and Inclusion: Towards Equal, Quality Educational Opportunities’, generating important agreements and commitments (http://bit.ly/2gsUe6z).

As part of the International Day of the Girl Child, UNICEF facilitated partnership between the office of the second vice-president, the National Child Welfare Agency and various other national institutions in support of an international forum to advocate for the rights of girls and adolescents with disabilities. The judiciary, National Assembly, Ministry of Justice, Public Defender, National Ombudsman, Bar Association, Defence for Children International and ILANUD sponsored a Congress to observe the 20th anniversary of the Juvenile Criminal Justice Law, with leading national and international experts. UNICEF Costa Rica, the National Child Welfare Agency (PANI) and the Institute of Municipal Development and Assistance (IFAM) helped to ensure the sustainability of the Child-Friendly Municipalities.
initiative – resulting in a renewed commitment by 32 municipalities to promote policy
dialogue and advocacy strategies with new authorities – the South-South cooperation
initiative with Belize and the strengthening of capacities in policy development for children’s
rights, prevention of child labour and adolescent participation with UNICEF Information and
Communication Technology ICT.

External Communication and Public Advocacy

UNICEF Costa Rica highlighted the rights of the most vulnerable children, underscoring
equity, Agenda 2030, early childhood development, breastfeeding, emergencies, UNICEF’s
70th anniversary and the Zika virus. Greater knowledge about these issues was shared,
resulting in its increased presence in social media networks: the number of Facebook
followers doubled from 24,900 to 53,840, reaching from 23,000 to 160,000 people; and
engagement rose to 5.3 per cent annually. The website reached 52,700 visitors and 67,900
sessions. There were 10,300 Twitter followers.

The social media campaign around ‘The Beginning of Life’ had an unprecedented organic
reach, with eight posts of 3.1 million; 17 posts with practical advice for parents with an an
average reach of 81,400; a post related to infant mortality reached 225,300; and a post on
the value of sports in the lives of children reached 882,300. The State of the World’s
Children report and UNICEF Costa Rica’s Annual Report 2015, the latter made public for the
first time, were widely distributed online. Both documents contributed to greater knowledge
on the progress and challenges faced in implementing children’s rights

Commemorating Children’s Day, UNICEF collaborated with the media to highlight the
current situation of children and adolescents. The campaign ‘Support Your Sons and
Daughters’ was part of the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ strategy to promote parental involvement in their
children’s education, reduce educational exclusion and promote school success. LACRO,
the Office of the Second Vice President and PANI held a forum on ‘Breaking Barriers to
Equality’ to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child. The forum served as a
platform for advocacy on the situation of girls in the national and regional agendas
(http://bit.ly/2ga6RUN). UNICEF chairs the Interagency Communications Working Group,
which led the advocacy component for the innovative National Pact for Sustainable
Development.

South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation

In October 2016, the Government of Costa Rica and UNICEF organized a field trip for a
team of government authorities and mayors from Belize entitled: ‘Promoting the protection of
children and adolescents through national and local policies’, in the framework of Costa
Rica’s Child Friendly Municipality initiative (CAI). This South-South cooperation experience
also involved four other UNICEF offices with advanced local development strategies for
children (Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador and Perú) and facilitated the expansion of knowledge
and sharing of successful experiences in various countries used to promote child-friendly
municipalities. From the beginning of this cooperation process; IFAM in Costa Rica and the
Ministry of Labour and Local Development of Belize agreed on the importance of promoting
and consolidating an agenda for municipal planning, including government institutions, the
private sector, and NGOs to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents at the
community level.

This South-South exchange strengthened analysis around strategic development,
community participation by children and adolescents, effective management of municipal
teams for improved protection of the rights of children and adolescents, research and studies
to better understand the situation of children and public investment for children and
adolescents at the local level. This experience also allowed participants to identify lessons
learned through analysis and similar initiatives, focusing on strategic questions related to managing their sustainability. The success of CAI and its policies, as well as the increased investment in children and adolescents, depends heavily on a proper understanding of what it means to guarantee rights and comprehensive protection. LACRO supported the documentation of this exchange as a best practice. UNICEF and the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN) finalised an innovative catalogue that documents interesting child-centred initiatives in Costa Rica that could be platforms for South-South cooperation with other countries in the region.

**Identification/Promotion of Innovation**

In coordination with PANI, UNICEF Costa Rica supported Families in Action (FAMA), which works through a nationwide network of parents that allows participants living in conditions of poverty and with lower academic levels to participate in parenting and childrearing sessions with their children, in order to replace negative environments with caring and nurturing ones. The methodology is based on the seven dynamics of the integral development pyramid: joy, self-esteem, sense of belonging, learning, physical and emotional safety, and basic needs. FAMA responds to a gap identified by communities of the need for more prevention services that respond to and capitalize on the community's own resources. FAMA forms part of the larger architecture of violence prevention initiatives in the country, and is innovative because it addresses relevance, is low cost and leverages the participation of civil society. The initiative has trained 532 facilitators in 12 municipalities and reached approximately 11,000 families.

In 2015, in partnership with the judiciary, UNICEF had supported the development of the innovative mobile app ‘Empodérate’ (Empower Yourself), which facilitates access to judicial resources for adolescents and their families. This mobile app addresses: responsibilities and duties of adolescents, sexual violence, maternity, paternity, child abuse, and use of illegal drugs. The success of the app led to support for two 2016 events to further promote the app among specific populations. The Juvenile Justice Court of Puntarenas undertook a workshop to disseminate the app, involving the Ministries of Public Security and Public Education and various operators and actors in the justice and civil society sectors. The app was also presented in the National Fair of Technologies of the Judicial Sector. By end-November 2016, the app had been downloaded by 6,175 persons, and continues to be administered by the Judicial Sector. UNICEF disseminated information about the Innovation Fund through social media platforms.

**Support to Integration and Cross-sectoral Linkages**

Inadequate integration among national institutions is a major bottleneck in Costa Rica; UNICEF has made important strides in fostering cross-sectoral linkages to generate greater efficiencies, reduce duplication and foster better results for children. UNICEF convened the National Institute for Social Care (IMAS), the Ministry of Public Education and PANI to strengthen the monitoring of programmes, plans and policies aimed at children and adolescents. In this connection, support was provided for the design of monitoring and evaluation systems for the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ (I’m All In) and the ‘Con Vos’ (We’re with You) educational programmes; the National Child Care Network; and the National Agenda for Children and Adolescents.

UNICEF also supported the partnership between the health and education ministries for the National Census on the Height and Weight of School Children, which will provide updated information on their nutritional status. The same ministries, in conjunction with IMAS, reached an agreement to standardize early childhood education by providing teachers for the child nutritional and educational centres operated by the Ministry of Health. UNICEF fostered greater coordination between CNE, CONAPDIS, the Coordination Centre for
Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America and USAID for the development of workshops and communication campaigns for inclusion, protection and care of people with disabilities in emergency situations.

Support was provided for dialogue between the Ministries of Justice and Education to coordinate the implementation of two similar violence-prevention initiatives, leading to a decision to implement them in the most vulnerable communities. In a similar vein, the two ministries came together to promote a national meeting on good practices in education and violence prevention. Another successful example of integration was the involvement of IMAS, PANI, CEN CINAI, a local farming and economic collective and coffee farmers to promote the protection and integrated development of indigenous migrant children through the Houses of Happiness programme, which will now be scaled up nationally.

**Service Delivery**

UNICEF Costa Rica does not directly support social service delivery, focusing instead on strengthening capacities (through research, advocacy and training) of local and national institutions to comply with their obligation to reach all children in the country, sustainably and with an equity focus. In addition, strategic support is provided to scale-up successful pilots and models. Identifying bottlenecks is fundamental in this domain of work, evidenced through UNICEF’s support to the School of Public Health of the University of Costa Rica to implement a research study on the causes of under-five mortality. This research will generate insights into the patterns of under-five mortality in poor and non-poor municipalities and will include a plan of action and strategies to address these disparities. This type of research can be replicated in many other sectors, using the monitoring results for equity system (MoRES).

Using advocacy and communication strategies to foster community demand for social services is strategic. In partnership with the Ministry of Public Education, the campaign ‘Preschool - the first step to fly’ was launched to motivate parents to enrol their children in preschool education. The campaign emphasizes that education is free and compulsory, and that the state has an obligation to provide the service.

With the Office of the Presidency, PAHO and the ministries of education and health, a national communication strategy was developed to combat the Zika virus providing critical information to individuals regarding preventive and protective services. Under the UN system framework, advocacy was conducted at the highest political level, including communication campaigns in the areas of sustainable development, human rights, sexual diversity, education rights of indigenous peoples, sexual violence against children and budgets for children. UNICEF generated evidence and advocated in support of the Government’s decision to scale up the successful Houses of Happiness pilot.

**Human Rights-Based Approach to Cooperation**

In 2016, UNICEF Costa Rica made important efforts to advocate for the inclusion of a human rights-based approach in national programmes and public policies. Furthermore, the development of the new 2018-2022 strategic plan is premised on the application of this approach to reduce inequities that affect the realisation of the rights of the most disadvantaged children. Strengthening national and local integrated protection systems involved building the capacities of institutions, civil society, families and communities to promote and protect the rights of all children, with a specific focus on violence prevention, ending secondary school exclusion and improving integrated early childhood development services.
Regarding excluded groups, and based on the framework of the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, UNICEF promoted communication processes and partnerships to facilitate children's and adolescents' access to protection services in situations of migration or emergencies.

UNICEF Costa Rica supported civil society to prepare the Alternative Report on the Situation of Children and Adolescents, which will generate opportunities for improved national analysis in relation to compliance and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) for the years 2007-2015. This report will also serve as a monitoring tool that can be used by partners dedicated to the protection of children and adolescents, as well as a mechanism for compliance and enforcement of rights. The Gender Inter-Agency Group (GIG) prepared an alternative report to the CEDAW Monitoring Committee, which analyses the country's progress in implementing its previous recommendations. The Group also supported the UN Country Team to elaborate the first Gender Scorecard. UNICEF spearheaded the elaboration of a UN communiqué to the National Assembly, based on CRC General Comment 19, to advocate for the protection and safeguarding of budgets for the National Child Welfare Agency and other institutions engaged in protecting children's rights.

**Gender Equality**

UNICEF Costa Rica focused its efforts on advocacy and social mobilization for reducing the high levels of violence and inequality experienced by girls in the country. For the first time in its history, in close coordination with LACRO, the Office of the Second Vice President of the Republic and PANI the country officially observed the International Day of the Girl Child through a full-day workshop on the rights of girls and adolescents living with disabilities, in order to shed light on the double discrimination they suffer due to their gender and disability.

In coordination with the PANIAMOR Foundation, UNICEF rallied other UN agencies to write an extensive communiqué to the National Assembly in support of the adoption of a law that punishes and criminalizes improper relationships between adults and children, especially girls. The Inter-Agency Group on Gender, of which UNICEF is an active member, launched the campaign 'Invest and Mobilise to Prevent Violence Against Women', held in conjunction with INAMU, and prepared an alternative report to the CEDAW Monitoring Committee, which analyses the country's progress in implementing its previous recommendations. This report will be an important element for facilitating the mainstreaming of gender issues in the 2018-2022 UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The Gender Interagency Group also supported the UN Country Team in the elaboration of the first Gender Scorecard. The visit of UNICEF's Regional Gender Advisor was an important input for elaboration of the gender mainstreaming strategy in the new 2018-2022 CPD.

**Environmental Sustainability**

UNICEF Costa Rica did not engage proactively in environmental sustainability issues, during 2016, but with the adoption of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, it is envisaged that the 2018-2022 Country Programme Document will step up efforts in this domain. Under the aegis of the Country Management Team, the Office started formulating a plan in 2016 to move towards reduction of its carbon footprint, for full implementation in 2017.

As part of the UN system, UNICEF Costa Rica participates in the recycling initiative undertaken by all agencies, including traditional and electronic recycling. Printing of publications has been reduced by 85 per cent, along with paper waste, and the use of digital technologies for the dissemination of programmatic and advocacy materials was prioritized. In terms of energy expenditure, staff members are now more aware about leaving lights and equipment off, leading to an 8 per cent reduction of the total office electricity bill.
Moreover, obsolete electronic equipment was transferred to a specialized technological equipment recycling company. Under the CAI strategy, 10 municipalities continued to develop environmental protection activities through volunteer programmes involving children and adolescents. Cleaning, garbage collection and recycling are the activities being organised. In rural areas, municipalities work on developing reforestation programmes, watershed maintenance and the promotion of organic farming. A survey conducted by UNICEF among 9,227 adolescents found that environmental issues ranked first on their list of concerns. Also, in the CPD-UNDAF consultations facilitated by UNICEF Costa Rica and conducted with 50 schools leaders and 20 elementary school students on sustainable development, the goals related to environmental protection occupied a prominent place. This suggests that environmental issues should occupy an important place in the agenda of UNICEF’s 2018-2022 Country Programme Document.

**Effective Leadership**

The country management team (CMT) met 15 times in 2016, playing an important role in monitoring programmatic and operational indicators through the manager’s dashboard, the performance management scorecard, EWEA and RAM, among other platforms and instruments, to foster a decision-making process that is timely and participatory, but most importantly, focused on rectifying potential risks.

The CMT also routinely monitored relevant topics such as: the 2014 Global Staff Survey Plan of Action, ACHIEVE compliance, transition of different operational functions from UNICEF Costa Rica to the GSSC and the multi-country support facility (MCSF), smooth running of the office, achievement of annual objectives and the functioning of statutory committees. The CMT followed recommendations for streamlining operations in small UNICEF offices, some of which were already being implemented by September 2016, when HQ issued guidance entitled ‘8 Opportunities for UNICEF Country Offices to Streamline Practices.’ Regular planning and monitoring have been the key elements to ensuring a more holistic approach to mitigating risks and ensuring that all staff understand their accountabilities. For example, following a situation of risk associated with one particular consultancy, the CMT undertook a review of recruitment workflows to prevent similar situations in the future.

All audit recommendations were reviewed, completed and closed. The Representative provided feedback to the CMT on key issues and recommendations emanating from Regional Management Team meetings. Finalization of the annual management plan was delayed due to the lengthy HQ process for finalizing platforms and guidance for the Performance Management Scorecard.

**Financial Resources Management**

The country management team (CMT) closely monitored all relevant financial resources indicators in the respective system dashboards to ensure full compliance with institutional standards. In addition, a Budget Monitoring Committee was established early in the year to follow up on implementation of the office budget (RR, OR, IB), to ensure effective and timely use of programme and operations funds and take corrective actions as and when required. The CMT monitored use of budget funds monthly, and made decisions concerning implementation of the budget and direct cash transfers (DCTs). The Office had no outstanding DCTs pending for more than six months during the year.

Regarding efficiency, travel expenses decreased by 45 per cent in 2016 compared to the previous year, operating expenses decreased by 38 per cent and electricity consumption was reduced by 8 per cent. The use of funds in relation to the annual ceiling amounts was at 83 per cent for RR and 97 per cent for OR, with the remaining balances to be rolled over and
re-phased, respectively, into the 2017 budget. Given that 2017 is the last year of the current programme cycle, the Office will ensure 100 per cent expenditure. Bank reconciliations were completed on time, in close coordination with the MCSF and GSSC.

Regarding resource management, UNICEF Costa Rica did not implement business continuity management, and this process is taking much longer as manual checks are still being issued. The recommendations resulting from the small office simplification exercise (initiated in late 2015) are being implemented and monitored by the CMT.

**Fundraising and Donor Relations**

As a UMIC, Costa Rica is not a beneficiary of large-scale resources from the donor community, and is effectively considered a "donor orphan". Thus, UNICEF Costa Rica resources come mainly from RR, ORR and regional thematic funds.

Resource utilization has been satisfactory, with 100 per cent of funds maturing in 2016 being fully utilized. With the support of LACRO, UNICEF Costa Rica developed a fundraising strategy to engage more strategically and systematically with the private sector, which included an approach to promote long-term partnerships with business entities. Seven companies were visited, principally from the banking and IT sectors, resulting in five partnership proposals that will be followed up in 2017.

It is envisaged that the partnership with LACRO will continue in 2017, in order to cover more sectors. An innovative breakfast meeting was developed with the private sector, together with the Ministry of Public Education, to position the 'Yo Me Apunto' strategy for combating educational exclusion. Several of the companies that participated indicated a strong interest in supporting the initiative through UNICEF, and due diligence screenings are currently underway.

**Evaluation and Research**

In 2016, the Country Office did not conduct an evaluation; however, the action plan for implementation of the 2015 evaluation of the AVANCEMOS cash transfer programme was completed and is underway in consultation with key Government counterparts. The evaluation management response was elaborated and monitored by the Country Management Team (CMT), with relevant action points implemented at different levels. The integrated monitoring and evaluation plan was routinely monitored by the team and at programme coordination meetings.

**Efficiency Gains and Cost Savings**

To make the budget more efficient, travel expenses were brought down by 45 per cent in 2016 compared to 2015, operating expenses decreased by 38 per cent in 2016 and electricity consumption was reduced by 8 per cent. The cost of furniture and equipment remained the same. Due to the reassignment of the programme manager to the Paraguay Country Office, a savings of 17 per cent was obtained in the budgeted payroll originating from RR, and due to one staff turnover in a senior programme assistant position, an additional savings of 26 per cent in OR was obtained.

**Supply Management**

Due to its presence as a UMIC, with very limited engagement in social service delivery, UNICEF Costa Rica does not manage supplies in a warehouse. The total amount of supplies for 2016 was US$489,325, of which programmes accounted for US$10,166 (six purchase orders; 2 per cent); Operations US$5,758 (five purchase orders; 1 per cent); and Service

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<th>Programme</th>
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<td>US$10,166 (6 purchase orders)</td>
<td>Operations US$5,758 (5 purchase orders)</td>
<td>US$473,401 (15 institutional contracts and 26 individual consultancy contracts)</td>
<td>US$489,325 (11 purchase orders, 41 contracts)</td>
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Security for Staff and Premises

The Office complies with all MOSS criteria; in 2016 security was enhanced with the installation of a state-of-the-art camera/video system. Due to the relatively high national security levels, no additional security measures were implemented related to physical and personnel security. Only one staff member required extra residential security. UNICEF Costa Rica held two emergency contact drills, and two satellite phones were tested. The UNCT conducted joint emergency drills with the Representative and all staff members.

Human Resources

The year 2016 saw high staff turnover, with two programme and operations support incumbents resigning shortly after incorporation and replaced by the next-ranked candidates. The programme specialist was appointed Deputy Representative in UNICEF Paraguay and the driver resigned at year-end. Another programme support post was hired during the year. Recruitment is underway for the programme manager and driver positions. This situation has had a significant impact on programmatic and operational continuity, closely monitored by the CMT, which undertook an analysis of lessons learned from this situation.

The CMT monitored implementation of the 2015 e-PAS and ACHIEVE 2016 planning process to ensure 100 per cent compliance with deadlines and benchmarks. Training plan activities were closely coordinated with the Staff Association, but only reached 33 per cent completion, in large part due to staff turnover and competing programmatic priorities. The CMT and Learning Committee will improve the quality control and monitoring of training activities in 2017.

All staff completed training in RBM and EWEA. The Office was visited by the UNICEF Regional Human Resources Adviser to carry out training on ethics and human resource issues. A staff retreat in March included monitoring of the Global Staff Survey Plan of Action, which is also a standing CMT item. The staff retreat was also an opportunity for the incoming Representative to share his expectations for the Office and programme. UNICEF Costa Rica is active in UN Cares; 2016 generated important achievements in the provision of information to staff regarding UN policies and procedures on HIV/AIDS, guaranteeing rapid access to PEP kits and training and social mobilization activities. Coordination with the MCSF and GSSC on human resource issues improved steadily, and the CO has started to include the participation of the former in CMT meetings.

Effective Use of Information and Communication Technology

The use of cloud services to optimize the transfer of information between different sections and partners was encouraged, along with the use of Office 365 and its different communication tools, which help to shorten distances and keep in touch with colleagues and associates. The idea is to further promote UNICEF standards and technological resources to facilitate and improve job performance.
Improvements in information technology practices were promoted in 2016, and digital media channels were strengthened. Proper waste management was promoted through recycling and reinvesting in technology to maintain a high operational level with compatible, energy-efficient devices. UNICEF Costa Rica has a very active and visible social media presence through the institutional website, Facebook and Twitter, thanks to the high digital penetration in the country. These platforms were instrumental to engaging with stakeholders and key influencers. The number of Facebook followers has doubled, from 24,900 to 53,840, with reach increasing from 23,000 to 160,000 on average, and the level of engagement has risen to 5.36 per cent on an annual basis. The website reached 67,900 sessions and 52,700 visitors, whilst the Twitter account boasts 10,300 followers.

These positive outcomes largely derive from the use of thematic campaigns. For example, in 2016, the social media campaign ‘Healthy Start’, which had an unprecedented total organic reach of 3.1 million with eight Facebook; 17 posts covering practical advice for parents with an average reach of 81,400; a post related to infant mortality had a reach of 225,300; and a post on the value of sports in the lives of children and adolescents had a total reach of 882,300.

**Programme Components from RAM**

**ANALYSIS BY OUTCOME AND OUTPUT RESULTS**

**OUTCOME 1 1.1** By 2017, children will have greater access to pertinent and quality education and integrated early childhood development care leading to a reduction of social disparities and inequalities.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

During 2016, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) continued its efforts to reduce educational exclusion, with a focus on secondary education. UNICEF Costa Rica has advocated in favour of focusing these efforts from a child-rights perspective by providing technical assistance to strengthen and develop key elements of strategies designed for that purpose. The strategies “Yo Me Apunto” (I’m All In) and in ECE continued, respectively, to reduce secondary-level exclusion and promote universal preschool education. As a result of the strategies applied, there was a slight decrease in exclusion at a time when this negative educational phenomenon was trending. Children who were out of the educational system are being integrated at the preschool level. Conditions are being determined in priority districts for the development of preschools at a national level.

**Educational exclusion:** Educational exclusion remains one of the major challenges faced by the adolescent population. Only four out of ten students manage to finish their secondary education. As a result, the Ministry of Public Education (MEP) started the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ strategy in 2015, which has continued in 2016, and aims to address exclusion in the third cycle of basic general and specialised education by promoting retention, reintegration and academic success in the Costa Rican public education system, presenting education as a right and a civic responsibility.

In support of this strategy, UNICEF has promoted and followed up on the development of activities that enhance the scope of the strategy and the dissemination of good practices that can be achieved in the education system. During 2016 ‘Yo Me Apunto’ worked with 196 secondary schools located in located in the 75 priority cantons of the country, in accordance with the current national development plan.
**Early childhood:** During 2016 UNICEF carried out strong advocacy promoting understanding of all elements needed for comprehensive child development, starting from an early age, based on evidence provided by neuroscience on the importance of ECD on a young child’s brain, cognitive and emotional development – as well as on the overall social and economic development of the country. During 2016 UNICEF supported the Ministry of Public Education in the development of its strategy for early childhood.

This strategy involves a political commitment by the Ministry to make preschool education universal and coordinated by this institution, with the involvement of other Government institutions. This strategy seeks to establish greater coverage of preschool education for children who reach 4.3 years of age. It addresses the need to expand coverage of preschool education, which currently only operates in 42 communities across 18 of the 27 regional education directorates.

Moreover, UNICEF has continued supporting the Music for Children programme, which provides technical and academic support to teachers at CEN CINAI centres in nine select educational regions.

**Violence in schools:** UNICEF Costa Rica has continued to provide technical assistance for the reformulation and improvement of national protocols to prevent violence in schools, and to develop monitoring tools for the programme "Living Together." UNICEF completed the review stage of this programme, and assisted in the production of three additional protocols to address the prevention of bullying, violence, weapons and drugs in school settings. Videos to provide awareness about bullying and violence were completed and are currently used by the MPE in secondary education institutions.

**OUTPUT 1 1.1.1** By 2017, an enhanced education system resulted in an increased number of children and adolescents living in regions with the greatest social/education inequities that complete primary and secondary within the standard timeframes.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**

Technical assistance from UNICEF facilitated access to best practices for reducing school exclusion. Four hundred school principals (directors) from the educational regions of Alajuela, Cañas, Coto Brus, Desamparados, Térraba, Guápiles, Liberia, Limón, Perez Zeledón, Puntarenas, San Carlos, San José, Santa Cruz, Sarapiquí, and the Northern Zone attended the first meeting to disseminate good practices for the 2015-2016 institutional strategy "Yo Me Apunto." As a means to create initiatives that provide tools and support to achieve reduce school exclusion in the country, this has been complemented by advocacy campaigns to promote societal responsibility for achieving quality education for all children and adolescents.

In the same vein UNICEF is planning a meeting of educational leaders in the framework of supporting the implementation of select projects under the "Yo Me Apunto" strategy, with the aim of improving coordination between Government and UN agencies. This meeting was scheduled to take place in November 2016; however, an overburdened Ministry of Public Education calendar forced the meeting to be postponed until the first week of March 2017.

As part of the results of these strategies, and in conjunction with various social programmes that aim to strengthen education, the annual dropout and abandonment rates in 2016 were reduced, breaking a trend experienced at all educational levels in 2015 and previous years. School dropout fell:

- From 4.4 to 4.2 per cent in the III educational cycle
- From 2.3 to 1.8 per cent in the I and II cycles
- From 0.8 to 0.5 per cent in the transitional cycle
From 0.6 to 0.3 per cent in interactive cycle

In schools that incorporated the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ education strategy in 2016, dropout and abandonment rates fell by 0.6 per cent in 96 of the 166 schools that first began implementation in 2015.

In the academic year 2016, schools were equipped with protocols to address bullying, violence, guns, and drug use through actions taken by the Ministry of Public Education’s Student Life Department.

OUTPUT 2 1.1.2 By 2017 in regions of greatest social exclusion, a targeted integrated early childhood development policy is applied, implemented by the relevant government agencies granting access to child care services for the most vulnerable children ages 0-7

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To achieve goals related to the population of children between the ages of zero and seven, UNICEF has advocated for inclusion of ECE and development as a priority issue for the country. In this context, and taking advantage of the current high level of political will on the issue, technical assistance related to early childhood has sought to reintegrate children who were formerly excluded from preschool educational services.

Within this context, UNICEF’s technical assistance served to strengthen ECE and increase the generation of information about the situation of schools and educational communities where preschool coverage needs to be expanded. This effort provided information on the status of: provision, infrastructure, teacher training and partnerships within the education community.

UNICEF Costa Rica supported the Ministry of Public Education to develop an awareness campaign regarding the value and motivational power of preschool education, directed towards parents and caregivers, encouraging them to enrol their children in preschool education for 2017. The campaign was launched at the end of 2016, before enrolment started for the 2017 school year. The campaign highlights the importance of comprehensive development at an early age by mentioning the topic in selected social media messages.

UNICEF also provided technical assistance to strengthen ECE through the development of a framework curriculum for teaching children between the ages of zero and six. The Ministry’s preschool education department was supported through discussions about the relevance of the current educational offer.

Moreover, UNICEF assisted MEP efforts to establish an institutional dialogue to strengthen its relationship with the health sector and its CEN CINAI centres, with the goal of articulating the educational services of these centres with those of the Ministry. MPE was supported in its efforts to provide educational services within the CEN CINAI, as a strategy to approach children who already have a learning opportunity outside of MEP.

Similarly, UNICEF provided support to the Music for Children programme in 2016, which was centralised in three regions (Central, Central North and Central Pacific regions) with a total of 42 centres. An estimated 1,480 children between the ages of two and eight benefited from this initiative, which incorporates music, arts and culture in an ECE setting.

OUTCOME 2 1.2 By 2017, the capacity of the child protection system is increased to implement innovative strategies to prevent and protect children against the various forms of violence within the schools, families and the community
Analytical Statement of Progress:
To improve operations of the National Integrated Child Protection System, UNICEF continued to support the formulation of the proposed technical feasibility study for improving the system, particularly at the sub-national level. The overall proposal will take two years to implement and includes adopting a series of technical, political and legal measures to help reduce the gap between centralized management by the CNNA and local sub-systems performance levels that also carry out integrated protection actions.

The comprehensive protection strategies promoted by policies and programmes at the local level, such as the CAI programme and Houses of Happiness, were in 2016 adopted by the IFAM and IMAS, respectively. In both cases, UNICEF support was vital to ensuring the continuation of strategic partnerships.

UNICEF Costa Rica promoted two key actions for violence prevention at the national level. The first was technical support for the development of the National Plan against Violence, which resulted in an agreement within the CNNA to create a specialised unit for coordination at the national level, to become operational in 2017. The other initiative supported by UNICEF was development of a National Plan against Commercial Sexual Exploitation.

New violence-prevention models were developed, while others initiated in 2015 were followed up during 2016. These models addressed different situations such as violence in families, communities and schools, and were directed at protecting various vulnerable groups, such as adolescents in trouble with the law, or children and adolescents who are vulnerable by virtue of living in high-risk communities.

A training strategy was developed to help families to change patterns of behaviour and social norms. The advances to date demonstrate a high degree of acceptance of the methodology, especially within civil society.

OUTPUT 1 1.2.1 By 2017, 20 cantons with the lowest welfare indicators have improved protection services against the different forms of violence for children and adolescents, in the family, the community and the school.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
At the national level, two strategic actions were promoted: the National Commission Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation received support to formulate a national plan against sexual exploitation, and UNICEF worked toward creating viable conditions in which to develop a national plan against violence. The main national action strategies were also more clearly defined, such that the CNNA approved the establishment of a national coordination unit for violence prevention to be developed in 2017, within PANI.

At the local level, working models aimed at eradicating violence in three different forms of action were promoted:

a) At the family level, a national network strategy was supported to train parents and caregivers, urging them to avoid physical and emotional abuse and promoting new, non-violent forms of peer parenting and education. Together with PANI in 2016, the FAMA programme reached 12 municipalities and 532 facilitators, who in turn trained an estimated 10,640 families.

b) At the community level, the social and educational SURGIR (Arise) strategy was strengthened. This strategy promotes NGO collaboration with PANI and the Judiciary to come up with measures to help adolescents who are in contact or conflict with the law, institutionalised in shelters and/or without family support. In 2017, UNICEF Costa Rica expects to help expand this strategy, in conjunction with NGOs nationwide.
PANI and the Ministry of Justice collaborated in the promotion of new models of community action, contributing to raising awareness among residents of the availability of local services that give opportunities for children and adolescents to occupy their free time in a constructive, positive and beneficial manner. This was the case of the programme ‘Civic Centres Without Walls’, which was launched in four communities in the Greater San Jose Metropolitan Area, and six early intervention centres formulated by PANI as part of a greater plan.

c) In schools, through joint coordination with the Vice Ministry of Peace and the Ministry of Public Education, UNICEF Costa Rica supported an initiative to prevent gun violence through the implementation of relevant protocols and tutorials. A toolkit was validated and distributed in 100 schools, calling attention to the fact that gun violence can be prevented through a comprehensive approach to all types of violence that might take place in schools, simultaneously applying multiple protocols and giving students second chances when they show that they have contributed through the adoption of good practices.

OUTPUT 2 1.2.2 By 2017 the National Integrated Child Protection System (SNPI) has an established mechanism to monitor and evaluate its performance and results.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
To improve comprehensive protection across the country, the CNNA presented a two-year strategy in response to a technical proposal of improvements elaborated in 2015. This proposal identified the need to involve new sectors, such as local governments, regional offices and community-based organisations, with more clearly defined roles and functions. Under this proposal, the CNNA will review and adjust institutional regulations, coordination protocols and the amendment of existing laws.

Local policies for children and adolescents were issued from the CAI initiative and implemented in 32 municipalities; 100 per cent of new councils continued with the initiative and, in the case of two municipalities, the policy agreements were collaborative.

At the Government level, IFAM continued training new municipal leaders in policies and programmes to benefit children and adolescents. UNICEF Costa Rica advised IFAM in the development of permanent training modules to benefit all municipalities. The CAI programme achieved international status, through a South-South collaborative exchange between Costa Rica and Belize and with the participation of observers and UNICEF colleagues from El Salvador, Brazil, Colombia and Perú, to learn more about the achievements and challenges of this initiative.

Meanwhile, IMAS continued its strengthening of day-care centres to address the needs and interests of indigenous migrant children. UNICEF Costa Rica helped to create a roadmap for implementation of an IMAS subsidy within the successful and innovative Houses of Happiness initiative, implemented by UNICEF in the context of a human security UN joint programme. IMAS promotes coordination between institutions so that they can develop their own roadmap for the final stage of making this subsidy official and permanent, to ensure national scaling-up of the initiative.

OUTCOME 3 2.1 By 2017, increased national and local capacities to systematically monitor and generate quality information, ensure that disadvantaged children and adolescents are prioritized by social policies and programs.
Analytical Statement of Progress:
During 2016 UNICEF Costa Rica worked with the MEP, IMAS and PANI to strengthen processes for monitoring and following up on the programmes, plans and policies aimed at children and adolescents, in the context of support provided in a UMIC. Support was provided for the design and implementation of monitoring and evaluation systems in three areas:

- The "Yo Me Apunto" strategy and the "Con Vos" (We're with You) programme, both managed by the Ministry of Public Education.
- The National Child Care Network, through development of a mechanism to monitor direct care alternatives for children within the framework of the network.
- The national agenda on children and adolescents, managed by the CNNA.

As part of the measures aimed at strengthening the generation of useful information to work with children and adolescents, and to guarantee the use of this information in decision-making spaces and processes, UNICEF Costa Rica has been working with INEC in two areas. First, by boosting information-generation capacities through development of the "Social Mapping of Children and Adolescents" project, as well as in the design processes of the MICS survey (to be implemented in 2017). Second, by working with the technical committee of the National Council for Children and Adolescents, presenting alternatives and proposals to improve the production of indicators and data to monitor the national agenda and national policy for children and adolescents. The strengthening of this process has triggered the need for an Observatory on Children and Adolescents, designed with an adequate information system, supported by INEC and its knowledge generated in this area.

As part of efforts to position and begin to accelerate the Sustainable Development Goals, UNICEF and UNDP organised the forum "No One Left Behind: Building a National Agenda of Inclusion for the Achievement of SDG 1". This forum was the beginning of a dialogue process on the strengths and challenges of public policies for reducing poverty in Costa Rica with the goal of influencing the institutionalisation of a more articulate and comprehensive model to enhance the country’s progress towards achieving SDG 1 (poverty eradication). Following the forum, teams were formed to develop an institutional proposal to be submitted for approval by the Council of Government in mid-2017.

OUTPUT 1 2.1.1 By 2017, the Children and Adolescents' Information System (SINA) generates information that informs policy makers for the formulation and revisions of legislations, public policies and programs targeted at reducing inequities.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
Together with INEC and MIDEPLAN, UNICEF Costa Rica is working on the social mapping of children and adolescents project, which aims to develop a system of geographical information containing maps, layers and indicators to assist the Government to organise and focus actions relevant to the population of children and adolescents. This will result in a specific module that will be part of the national system of social maps, used by more than 30 Government agencies to target efforts of the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, known as "Bridge to Development".

An agreement was signed between INEC, MIDEPLAN, PANI and UNICEF on the information system on children and adolescents to establish guidelines for the development of the system. By end-2016, a technical committee was developing a conceptual proposal for implementation of the system, which falls within the framework of PANI's Observatory of Children and Adolescents.
Together with the University of Costa Rica, and under the project “Situation of the Rights of Children and Adolescents” (EDNA), UNICEF Costa Rica initiated an assessment of the 15-year-old experience to generate lessons and recommendations that will contribute to improving the quality and impact of the EDNA report on the decision-making process for the formulation of policies, programmes, and projects in institutions and social organisations that work with children and adolescents.

During the design stage of the MICS, INEC and the Ministry of Health received technical advice from UNICEF LACRO and HQ about successful implementation of the global MICS-6 pilot test. Eight officials from INEC and three from the Ministry of Health participated in this process.

Within the implementation framework of the first school census of height and weight, UNICEF Costa Rica assisted the ministries of Health and Education with drafting and design of the tools for collecting information and data analysis capabilities, resulting in 750,000 students surveyed country-wide. The census involved nearly 80,000 teachers at 4,200 public and private schools and, for the first time, included students with disabilities, who are often not included in such monitoring initiatives.

OUTPUT 2 2.1.2 By 2017, Costa Rican social sectors and civil society organizations have increased capacity to monitor equity-based results and undertake evidence-based advocacy.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
During 2016 UNICEF Costa Rica worked with the Central American Institute of Public Administration, UNESCO and UNDP for the development of a Forum on Social Policy Management, which aims to promote the exchange of knowledge, best practices and lessons learned on issues related to human rights. The Forum will provide feedback and opportunities to strengthen the management of social policies. In addition to contributing to institutional organisation and fostering an academic discussion on social stewardship and social coordination, a system of social management indicators was developed with the goal of measuring the evolution of institutional and academic capacities and implementation of tools for planning, programming, monitoring and creation of social assessments to ensure comprehensive care consistent with human rights. The forum will feature an analytical module on children and adolescents.

UNICEF supported civil society organizations to prepare the Alternative Report on the Situation of Children and Adolescents, which will generate opportunities for improved national analysis by civil society in relation to compliance and implementation of the UN CRC for the years 2007-2015. This report is a monitoring tool that can be used by partners dedicated to the protection of children and adolescents to multiply expand efforts, as well as a mechanism to ensure compliance and enforcement of rights.

OUTCOME 4 3.1 By 2017, the program of cooperation will have incorporated a gender perspective, communications for development and preparedness and response for children and adolescents in emergencies.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
During 2016, the early childhood "Healthy Start" campaign on social media had an unprecedented organic reach, through just eight posts: articles with tips for parents and caregivers (17 in total) were shared 3.1 million times for an average reach of 81,400 each. A post on infant mortality reached 225,300 people, and a post about the value of sports in the lives of children had a total reach of 882,300.

For the second year in a row, "The Biggest Lesson in the World," was imparted by the Minister of Public Education as a key to positioning the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable
Development in the education system.

Moreover, a series of materials for teachers and students (interactive guides, videos, posters, and leaflets) were produced to complement the protocols about guns and prevention of violence and substance abuse.

In partnership with the Judiciary, UNICEF in 2015 supported the development of an innovative the mobile app "Empodérate" (Empower Yourself), which seeks to facilitate access to judicial resources for adolescents and their families. This mobile app addresses issues of: responsibilities and duties of adolescents, sexual violence, maternity, paternity, child abuse, and use of illegal drugs.

Due to the success of the app, the Judiciary and UNICEF prioritized two events in 2016 to further promote the app among specific populations of stakeholders and partners. In February, the Juvenile Justice Court of Puntarenas undertook a workshop to disseminate the app, involving the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Public Education and various operators and actors in the justice and civil society sectors. In November, the app was presented at the National Fair of Technologies of the Judicial Sector. By end-November 2016, the app had been downloaded by 6,175 persons and continues to be administered by the Judicial Sector. Plans are afoot to continue rolling out the app in 2017.

With the support of LACRO, the Office of the Second Vice-President and PANI sponsored a regional forum to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child, with a focus on “Breaking the barriers that impede the equality of girls: a commitment of everyone.” National and international high-level experts presented different experiences in this forum, attended by more than 130 participants. The forum contributed to ongoing advocacy around the situation of girls on the national and regional agendas.

In conjunction with the PANIAMOR Foundation and with support from the UN system, UNICEF successfully advocated for the adoption of a law that will criminally punish improper relationships between adults and minors.

The UN Inter-Agency Group on Gender supported the campaign to 'Invest and Mobilise to Prevent Violence against Women', which was held in conjunction with INAMU. As part of the GIG role in monitoring CEDAW Committee recommendations and mainstreaming gender equality in the new UNDAF, GIG prepared an alternative report to the CEDAW Monitoring Committee.

As part of disaster recovery efforts in the wake of Hurricane Otto, UNICEF Costa Rica called on PANI and MEP to enhance the protection and care of children in emergency situations. A series of messages were compiled, developed and disseminated across social networks about the measures that should be taken in emergency situations and how to provide adequate protection and care of children during emergencies and natural disasters. The social media updates were posted and shared by key institutions such as the Presidency, MEP and PANI, among others.

In partnership with the CNE and CONAPDIS, UNICEF Costa Rica sponsored a workshop with Government officials and people with disabilities to validate and produce educational materials, including TV spots, radio spots, posters, printed materials and social media updates. The aim was to call attention to the regional standards for inclusion, developed with UNICEF support, which deal with the protection and care of persons with disabilities during emergencies and disasters. In 2017, a training process will begin with the goal of promoting the use of these materials in a more systematic manner.
OUTPUT 1 3.1.1 By 2017, the program will contribute with integration initiatives and programmatic coordination to raise awareness about populations that have been excluded and promote changes in behaviour and knowledge.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Education collaborated to make the ‘Support Your Sons and Daughters’ campaign part of the ‘Yo Me Apunto’ strategy to promote greater parental involvement in the education of their children, help reduce school dropout rates, and promote school success.

In partnership with the Office of the Presidency, MEP, Ministry of Health and PAHO, a national communication strategy to fight the Zika virus, with funding provided by LACRO.

A communication strategy involving six TV spots, four radio spots and social media updates was developed to promote the protection and inclusion of people with disabilities during emergencies. The campaign will be launched in 2017.

Under the UN system framework, advocacy was conducted at the highest political level, and communication campaigns were supported in the areas of sustainable development, human rights, the LGTB population, educational rights of indigenous peoples, children’s rights as they relate to improper relations with minors and protecting budgets for children.

Additionally, the FAMA methodology to prevent domestic violence in families and communities was widely disseminated.

OUTCOME 5 Effective and efficient governance and systems to manage risks and achieve programme results.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
UNICEF Costa Rica’s annual management plan set out the priorities and indicators related to the country programme and office management and performance. Progress was monitored by the country management team through the Manager’s Dashboard, to identify weaknesses and implement corrective measures.

Operations assumed the implementation of actions and measures for effective and efficient use of resources and management of support.

OUTPUT 1 Effective and efficient governance and systems to manage risks and achieve programme results.

Analytical Statement of Progress:
The Office updated its Risk and Control Self-Assessment in 2015. The CMT monitors its oversight indicators to ensure alignment with global standards on management and quality assurance.

All Office statutory committees were established promptly and functioned according to UNICEF rules and regulations. The composition of the committees was reviewed during preparation of the annual management plan.

Effective technical support and maintenance of ICT infrastructure ensured full connectivity with all the systems during the year. Reliable and stable connectivity to UNICEF HQ contributed to the proper implementation of VISION.

UNICEF Costa Rica has two outstanding audit recommendations.
In 2016 the Office began the process of preparing the CPD 2018-2022.

**OUTPUT 2** Effective and efficient management and stewardship of financial resources related to office administration.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
The Office monitored and tracked the budget results on a weekly basis, which with time, created a model for monitoring progress, identifying challenges and making decisions. Consequently, all target measures of effective financial management were met.

Measures adopted include: 1) weekly budget monitoring in all work areas; 2) agreement to adjust the office schedule to speed up implementation; 3) liquidation of all funds by counterparts according to the harmonized approach to cash transactions standard; 4) agreements with suppliers of goods and services to reduce the number of transactions and to accumulate bills until the total amount due exceeds $500; 5) UN-House agreement with UNFPA and UNDP to improve efficiency and effectiveness of services for premises.

**OUTPUT 3** Effective and efficient management of human capacity, including staff development and learning and staff well-being.

**Analytical Statement of Progress:**
UNICEF Costa Rica managed recruitment processes for three positions that are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2017. All staff members completed the required performance evaluation steps on time.

Staff members have been trained and worked on topics such as planning and project management and social networks. All staff has access to counselling resources, as well as the support of the staff association and HR.

**Document Center**

**Evaluation and research**

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**Other publications**

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Executive summary of the State of the rights of children and adolescents in Costa Rica
Reprinted of Teaching guide of the pre-school education curriculum
Facilitation guide and Pedagogical cards of activities to promote musical initiation

Lessons learned

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